



The Paulist Fathers

1500 South Michigan Avenue • Chicago, Illinois 60605-2183

Tel: 312-922-3444 • Fax 312-922-3447

Monday, June 15, 2020

Blessings on each of you!

In this very complicated time I'm praying for each of you, for good health and good peace. If you've driven by the church recently, you'll see the words, "Black Lives Matter!" And you might ask, don't all lives matter? Certainly as a Church we teach that, and I hope we are living that. But – when a particular group is suppressed, overlooked or disrespected the Church must speak out for them. To say Black Lives Matter commits us as OSM Parish to doing something to bring everyone onto the playing field of equal justice, common civility and to progress as human beings.

Covid-19 also calls us to care for life. Neither of these challenges can wait to be addressed. At OSM Parish we are working on both. The simple question for each of us at this time is what are we going to do to heal division and bring healing to the sick, even as we work at preventing violence and disease from spreading? Further, as a community how do we move forward to work together to insure that all people are safe and respected?

We need to come together. And we are beginning to reopen our church and return to regular liturgies. We have celebrated a wedding, have baptisms scheduled, along with reconciliation and adoration, and can do funerals. We have completed certification for the Archdiocese's Phase 1 and 1a, which I have mentioned previously. We are now looking to Phase 2.

In Phase 2, SUNDAY MASSES will be open for up to 50 attendees STARTING ON JUNE 27/28. If people register, we anticipate doing all four weekend Masses. We require pre-registration for every Mass by the Wednesday before the scheduled Mass. The registration system will help maintain limits on capacity and help insure your safety. Please check the parish website for the pre-registration link, or call the main parish number 312-922-3444. Remember you are all still dispensed from attending Mass until the pandemic is over.

Enclosed with this letter is the REOPENING GUIDE describing the self-checks you must make before you are able to attend Mass in person (we are still livestreaming all Masses). More specifically, to insure the safety of you and all our attendees, you cannot come if you are medically at risk, have a temperature, or you have had contact with someone with Covid-19 in the last 14 days. If you are in any of these categories, you are especially dispensed from attending Mass.

Those who can attend Mass in person at this time, please know, you will be required to wear a mask at all times, socially distance from other attendees, and sanitize your hands at points during Mass. Also, once you arrive at church you will be directed by trained greeters and ushers who will seat you and direct you throughout the Mass. Also, the enclosed REOPENING GUIDE also has specific directions for communion. These instructions will also be provided during Mass itself.

In the church, before and after each Mass and liturgy, all pews will be cleaned and sanitized, as well as vessels and other furnishings. As much as possible we want to make the space safe and ushers and greeters are there to help you with that. To help keep the space safe, we need to keep track of where people are and sit so we better know what to clean and sanitize – so please be patient and cooperative with the greeting and cleaning volunteers and staff. This is new for all of us and we want things to go smoothly.

This is obviously only a partial reopening, but it is part of the process of a total reopening as soon as it becomes safe to do so. For now, it will be Sunday Masses, certain sacraments, adoration and prayer and funerals that are scheduled. When we can do more in person, we will let you know. We will continue to livestream all Masses.

Please help us overcome the virus and injustices in our society by working together through prayer and reflection on all Christ calls us to do to care for one another.

Thanks for your help. Be Safe! Be Well! Many Blessings!

*Fs. T. Paul Scherle, OSB
Priest*